Alberta

SPEECH FROM THE THRONE

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SESSION OF THE 20TH LEGISLATURE OF
THE PROVINCE OF ALBERTA ON
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THE HONOURABLE FRANK LYNCH-STAUNTON
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR, PROVINCE OF ALBERTA

MR. SPEAKER AND MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY:

I have the honour to welcome you to the Second Session of the Twentieth Legislature of the Province of Alberta.

One purpose of this Address is essentially to set forth the agenda for the Second Session of the Twentieth Legislature. My government will, as part of the agenda, emphasize the following five priority areas:

1. **Fiscal Policy Directions** — The provincial budget for the fiscal year commencing April 1, 1984, will be an obvious highlight and priority of the Session. Balancing fiscal responsibility with an economic climate that will stimulate growth and jobs in the private sector will be the dual goal of the budget proposals.

2. **Basic Education Reforms** — My government proposes an in-depth reevaluation both of the appropriateness of the School Act and of the adequacy of curricula in junior and senior high schools to better prepare our young people for a more competitive and challenging world market place.

3. **Deregulation** — A government-wide effort is being made to reduce or eliminate unnecessary or obsolete regulations which frustrate or complicate the lives of our citizens as well as the operations of businesses — some of which will lead to legislative proposals for the Assembly.

4. **Expanded Privatization** — Building on the successful privatization of Pacific Western Airlines, a number of provincial departments are proposing that segments of their operations could be more efficiently undertaken by private sector firms.

5. **Legislative Proposals** — The Assembly will be asked to consider a number of substantive legislative proposals including a new Child Welfare Act and a Bill to amend several Alberta statutes to clarify existing law in order to accord with provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

THE STATE OF THE ALBERTA ECONOMY

Depending on world commodity conditions, the Alberta economy will strengthen considerably in 1984. There will, however, continue to be sectors such as construction which will face problems because of recent over-building.

Our basic agriculture industry should remain relatively stable in 1984. Given good growing and weather conditions the high level of productivity of Alberta agriculture should assure a satisfactory position for farm incomes.

Our other primary industry of oil and natural gas anticipates 1984 to be a year of growing strength. World oil prices are still somewhat fragile but should hold despite second quarter pressure. A longer term solution for shut-in oil production problems continues to be a cause of concern. On the other hand, there are a number of positive factors — cash flow to the explorers is increasing — heavy oil markets are strong in the United States — lease and bonus options confirm expanded exploration plans — and steady progress is being made in oil sands and heavy oil projects, areas in which technical achievement and enterprise have made Albertans uniquely productive.

A major factor is the shift in interest of explorers back to western Canada for both conventional and non-conventional activity as a result of recent geological assessment in the Canadian north and off-shore areas.

However, a major problem continues into 1984 — the maintenance of our critical market for natural gas in the United States. Prospects for improved sales in the medium term are promising.

The oil and gas industry in Alberta is the major factor in job stability and job creation. Many jobs, although not directly related to the industry, depend upon the strength of this industry for their continued prosperity. As a result of an improved forecast, job security for most Albertans is significantly greater than it has been during the past two years.

There are still areas of concern, primarily with construction, as a result of overbuilding in recent years. This will result in a continuation of much lower levels of employment in construction, compared to our boom years. As a result of the abnormal in-migration from other provinces between 1978 and 1981 in particular, unemployment levels will remain at the national average.

However, Alberta should continue with its record of the highest level of employment in relation to population of any province in Canada.

Another positive element in Alberta's economy is that, depending in part upon public sector salary settlements, inflation in Alberta should remain at the present relatively low rate.

REVIEW AND FORECAST OF ACTIVITIES

A major purpose of this Address is to summarize progress and to forecast activity in various areas within the government which will have a bearing on policy considerations during the forthcoming Session.

ADVANCED EDUCATION

Albertans are extending their learning at unprecedented levels of participation. Full-time enrolments at universities, colleges and technical institutes grew by more than eight percent this past fall, to a total of 65,000 students, continuing the growth that began in the late 1970's. These enrolments are expected to continue to grow through the coming year, as high school graduates now tend to proceed directly into post-secondary education, and as adults return to school from the work force.

In order to meet the demands of increasing enrolments, my government has provided supplementary funding to post-secondary institutions and has undertaken a major commitment to assist students in meeting costs of their education. As a result, Alberta maintains the most comprehensive student assistance program in Canada. Last year, some 38,000 students were assisted through loans and grants, an increase of 22% over the previous year, while funding of these programs increased approximately 70%. In addition, expenditures under the unique Alberta Heritage Scholarship Program have been expanded.

A number of important capital projects will be continued or completed during the coming year, including the Business Administration and Commerce Building at The University of Alberta, Scurfield Hall at The University of Calgary, the Arts Centre at Red Deer College, Phase II Expansion of Mount Royal College, and new facilities at Alberta Vocational Centre — Lac La Biche.

Following completion this year of its Technology Building, Lakeland College will join Fairview College, Keyano College and Red Deer College in the decentralization of instruction in the trades and technologies, an initiative undertaken several years ago. This program has provided over 5,000 new training places in areas outside Edmonton and Calgary and, through the construction of residences, provided over 1,200 new units of accommodation to colleges involved in trades and technology programs.

The new campus of Athabasca University, to be opened in September, will complete the relocation of this university to its permanent site.

The Nursing Research Foundation became operational in 1983-84 and began a program in support of research in the field of nursing, under which $1 million will be provided over a five year period.

WOMEN'S ISSUES

In recognition of the importance of women's concerns in shaping policies and programs, my government recently established the Women's Secretariat. The Secretariat, of which the existing Alberta Women's Bureau will become a part, will provide a focal point for identifying and assessing government policies, programs and legislation which impact on women. This initiative will enable women's concerns and aspirations to be more fully integrated into the policy development and decision-making processes of government.

BASIC EDUCATION

Initiatives in education, always a high priority, will reflect my government's continuing commitment to providing quality education for our children.

A significant new initiative in education in the past year has been the introduction of grade 12 diploma exams, a policy received positively by most students, teachers and parents, and which will provide some much needed standards in our education system and ensure high quality. In the year ahead, there will be a new approach to address the challenges of teacher evaluation and professional conduct.

Also in 1984/85, priorities will include major reviews of the junior and senior high curricula and of The School Act, as well as the provision of specific additional funds to support programs for gifted and talented children, for other special needs children and for in-service projects for teachers.

My government is committed as a priority to assuring that the graduates of our high schools are able to compete in the anticipated new world of technology and international competition.

HOSPITALS AND MEDICAL CARE

Rapidly increasing rates of utilization of health care services continues to be a major problem facing all governments in Canada. In Alberta, arrangements are underway for the government and the medical profession to cooperatively develop reasonable means of constraining utilization.

In the hospital segment of health care, the option of hospital user fees has already created a better awareness of the need for cost control in the administration of all hospitals. Further steps will be taken to constrain hospital costs and inform citizens of actual health care costs.

The recently introduced program of directly linking the payment of health care premiums to eligibility for insured benefits has been very successful. Since the policy was announced, more than $12 million in premium arrears has been paid.

Excellent progress is continuing in the program of hospital construction and improvement and many new facilities will open in the coming months.

Further steps will be taken in the program of nursing home improvements and significant reports are expected related to organ transplant programs and the Alberta Heritage Fund for Medical Research.

SOCIAL SERVICES AND COMMUNITY HEALTH

A new Child Welfare Act will be recommended to the Assembly, reflecting certain recommendations of the Cavanagh Board of Review and public response to legislation introduced but not passed in the recent Session. The new proposals will focus on the family and provide for protection of children in ways which will prevent unnecessary intrusions into family responsibilities.

A proposed new Public Health Act will also be introduced, incorporating the provisions of six existing Acts and leading to a reduction of public health related regulations. Changes to the Alberta Aids to Daily Living and Extended Health Benefits Program will be implemented to increase effectiveness and efficiency and stabilize costs, while continuing the high level of service provided by the program.

Steps will be taken to implement some provisions of the Report of the Task Force to Review the Mental Health Act.

The unique Alberta Widow's Pension Program introduced last year has provided benefits to approximately 2,500 Alberta widows and widowers between the ages of 55 and 64, allowing access as well to extended health benefits and other programs formerly only available to seniors.

My government continues to encourage the involvement of volunteers and the private sector in providing services. Consistent with this policy, services are now available to 85% of the province through Family and Community Support Services agreements with municipalities, Metis settlements, Indian bands and National Parks authorities.

The Alberta Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Commission will continue its successful prevention programs to combat alcohol and drug problems with young people. A decrease in the number of teenage Albertans who consume alcohol is very encouraging and the Commission's prevention programs are receiving acceptance both by young persons and by parents.

WORKERS' HEALTH, SAFETY AND COMPENSATION

Last year, a Select Committee of the Legislative Assembly was established to review the operations of The Workers' Compensation Act and The Occupational Health and Safety Act. Public hearings were held in seven centres throughout the province and over one hundred submissions were received to assist the Select Committee which is expected to report during the Spring Sitting.

In December 1983, the new General Safety Regulation was approved to come into effect on September 1, 1984. This regulation, which

consolidates and replaces five separate safety regulations, was extensively reviewed by industry and labour. Performance standards which describe safety objectives have now been set. The result is that those in the work place, not government, will determine the most effective way of achieving the required objectives.

Amendments to The Radiation Protection Act will be proposed to the Assembly to bring this legislation into line with current technology and practices.

NATIVE AFFAIRS

The Business Assistance for Native Albertans Corporation provides a continuing source of business counselling for prospective and new native businesses and the Native Venture Capital Company Ltd., a unique cooperative venture with the private sector, has provided a source of equity capital to support Native business enterprises ranging from a motel in Cardston to a grocery store in Anzac.

Progress continues to be made in programs for Native children in an important social area pioneered by bands in Alberta. Under the Lesser Slave Lake Indian Regional Council-Canada-Alberta Child Welfare Agreement, signed last year, native children in need of care are cared for in consultation with their home community, rather than by the government child welfare system alone.

With the amendment to the Northland School Division Act, twenty-six trustees were elected from northern Alberta's isolated areas to form the new school board. For the first time Treaty Indians were able to vote in the selection of these trustees.

Construction of the new campus at Lac La Biche and the success of the Metis Settlement Carpentry Program show my government's commitment to educational opportunities for our native people.

The report of the Joint Committee reviewing the Metis Betterment Act is expected during this Session and continued development of Metis settlements through the installation of municipal services and local government training will be sustained.

ENVIRONMENT

Important action will be taken during this Session to establish a system to ensure safe handling and disposal of special and hazardous waste in Alberta, including a central treatment facility operated by the private sector and responsible to the Special Waste Management Corporation.

The new Acid Deposition Research Program, to be conducted jointly by government and industry, will provide information over a period of years

and constitute the scientific basis for long term environmental management and understanding of the effects of emissions of acid forming gases such as sulphur and nitrogen oxides on the environment. This program will study the possible effects of emission on human health and on vegetation, soils and water.

New technologies for the management of special wastes are being assessed by the Alberta Environmental Centre and planning is being done to privatize routine, analytical services and offer some specialized services on a fee for service basis.

The Dickson Dam on the Red Deer River is now in operation and has begun to provide significantly higher water flows for that important river system. During this year, it is proposed to select a site for the Oldman River Dam.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Last year represented a growing challenge to Alberta business to maintain their increasing penetration of world markets. Government has worked with Alberta companies in helping expand international sales, and this role will increase this year emphasizing marketing efforts directed at selected international targets. Recent activities of both government and industry have resulted in visits of trade and industrial missions from various parts of the world, including delegations from the western United States. Alberta is the first Canadian province to receive these western United States delegations.

The second Annual Export Achievement Awards Program was held in October in conjunction with National Export Trade Month. Companies were recognized for export achievement in categories ranging from innovative market development to new products.

The petrochemical industry has continued to grow. Approximately $1 billion of new fertilizer and chemical capacity came on stream in 1983. A second ethylene plant and associated derivative plants, with an investment of over $2 billion, will start up this year.

New initiatives in Alberta's food processing industry now include production facilities for snack food, vegetable refining, cheese processing and baking.

The Centre for Frontier Engineering Research is now established and is expected to aid in the development of advanced technology for companies working in cold climates.

The Motion Picture Development Corporation has met with success in attracting film productions to Alberta — with several projects currently in the development stage for 1984 filming.

AGRICULTURE

In 1983, the Federal Government passed the Western Grain Transportation Act, ending the first phase in the resolution of difficulties which arose from the Crow issue. An evaluation now underway, of the impact of this legislation on Alberta farmers will be of very great importance to our preparation for the mandatory review of the Act to take place in 1985/86.

Agricultural production continues to change and policies must remain flexible. Farm numbers have somewhat stabilized after dropping for a number of years; however, today's farms are larger, more specialized, more costly to operate and require greater capital investment than Albertans have ever known.

My government is actively working, in cooperation with other governments, to arrive at a national stabilization program for the red meat industry which would be voluntary, market-neutral, actuarially sound and would be paid for by contributions from producers and the federal and provincial governments. While efforts toward achieving this objective have been underway for some time, significant developments in 1983 have helped to bring the several governments closer in 1984 to the needed plan which, to be acceptable to my government, must be acceptable to Alberta livestock producers.

My government will also continue its efforts to correct federal policies which hinder development of our agricultural sector. Objectives include development of a fair and just national feed grain policy and establishment of equitable rail transportation rates for all Alberta agricultural products, raw and processed.

During 1984, my government will continue to cooperate with the private sector to further strengthen the marketing thrust which has established Alberta as a supplier of high-quality products to nations on the Pacific Rim and to the western United States. Last year, these efforts produced many notable successes, including a significant increase in the marketing of Alberta processed meat and other products in several large United States population centres. This government-industry cooperation will be maintained and strengthened as we look to increase our involvement in these markets and also to strengthen markets in Latin America and elsewhere. This year's opening of the provincial Food Processing Development Centre at Leduc will provide Alberta processors with the facilities needed to develop and test new products for both domestic and export markets.

My government will maintain its commitment to provide strong support for producers and agribusiness where needed through programs offered by the Alberta Agricultural Development Corporation. Continued emphasis will be placed on farm financial planning to assist producers experiencing financial management difficulties.

My government will give strong emphasis to maintaining and improving soil and water resources in 1984. A review of the Irrigation Rehabilitation and Development Program will be undertaken. This review will include an evaluation of the way in which capital funds are allocated from the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund to irrigation projects in southern Alberta.

New legislation will be recommended to the Assembly in respect to the Veterinary Profession and the profession of Home Economics.

Amendments will be proposed to The Stray Animals Act, The Agricultural Pests Act and The Marketing of Agricultural Products Act.

ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

A number of important steps were undertaken during the past year to strengthen the oil and gas industry.

Early last year, the National Energy Board, at the request of my government, relaxed its export conditions for crude oil and by early summer subsidies for the transportation of crude oil to the Atlantic provinces were achieved. In June a federal-provincial agreement to amend the 1981 Energy Pricing and Taxation Agreement was concluded ensuring that there would be no rollback of conventional oil prices. A significant amount of oil was reclassified so it would receive the new oil reference price. At the same time, modified fiscal policies for heavy oil and oil sands development were agreed to by the provincial and federal governments and the United States brought in new policies which resulted in increased United States demand for heavy oil from Canada.

The combination of these various factors ensured that the shut-in oil problem which affected the industry in 1982 was resolved for most of 1983. Alberta oil was sold in the Atlantic provinces and shipped to Japan for the first time while exports of heavy Alberta crude to the United States increased. Heavy oil, enhanced oil recovery, and oil sands activity picked up correspondingly.

Syncrude confirmed its expansion plans. The B.P. Wolf Lake, Esso Cold Lake and most recently Amoco Elk Point projects announced that they would proceed into commercial operations. Other experimental projects stepped up activity as well.

Land sales and drilling activity improved as conventional oil exploration and development activity accelerated during 1983.

These more encouraging activity levels on the oil side are expected to continue in 1984 as oil demand, prices and fiscal policies remain favourable.

The natural gas industry experienced notable difficulties in 1983. Demand continued to be weak as the United States and Canadian economies attempted to recover from the recession. Canadian gas experienced competition from United States gas production and was affected by the uncertain legislative and regulatory climate in the United States. During the year, measures were taken to improve the competitive position of gas and increase sales.

Incentives are being explored, in consultation with the consuming provinces and industry, to increase the sale of natural gas to industrial gas users in Canada. Marketing of gas to the United States continues to present a challenge. During 1983, my government was actively involved in the implementation of the natural gas marketing strategy set out by the joint Alberta-industry "initiatives" paper. This year, intensive efforts will be outlined to develop a marketing strategy for Canadian gas which will be more market oriented.

My government has also moved to simplify legislation and reduce the administrative and regulatory burden of the industry. The Freehold Mineral Rights Tax Regulations were simplified, crude oil royalty reporting procedures were streamlined and the Alberta Petroleum Incentives Program application procedures were simplified.

The forest industry in Alberta is recovering from previously depressed lumber markets caused by the North American economic recession, and the prospects for 1984 are encouraging. In 1983, the Alberta sawmill industry reached a record production level of one billion board feet of lumber. The Timber Salvage Incentive Program provided significant assistance to the industry in achieving this record production level.

TOURISM AND SMALL BUSINESS

The very successful Alberta Heritage Fund Small Business and Farm Interest Shielding Program will complete its two year term in 1984.

This program was introduced in September 1982, as part of the Economic Resurgence Plan, to lend certainty and confidence to the small business and farm community in Alberta. It is expected that approximately $88 million will have been distributed to some 50,000 small businesses and farms by the time the program is completed.

Small business confidence in Alberta is now a more positive feature again in our economy and some 14,000 new business incorporations were recorded in 1983, a 2.4% increase over 1982.

Legislation will be recommended to the Assembly to establish the Small Business Venture Capital Program to aid small business in a very significant way through increasing accessibility to equity capital by stimulating the formation of private sector controlled pools of venture capital.

Cooperative tourism promotions with the private sector, including the promotion of national and international conventions for Calgary and Edmonton, are now being undertaken to attract Albertans to Alberta resorts as well as Canadian and overseas visitors to our province.

The Northern Alberta Development Council continues its programs of encouraging public participation in the economic and social development of Alberta's north. The Council is following up its successful Northern Ministers' Conference and Doctor Recruitment Interchanges held during the past year. Priorities for the coming year involve an analysis of northern economic development opportunities, recommendations regarding early school leavers and a conference on northern tourism.

HOUSING

In 1983, some 17,000 housing units were begun in Alberta representing approximately ten percent of Canada's total housing starts. In 1984, housing starts are expected to be modestly less.

Because of this reduced volume and the recent slowdown in activity, proposals will be made to the Assembly to combine the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and the Alberta Housing Corporation into a single corporation which will continue to address the needs of senior citizens and low income families in the province, although less active in other housing fields.

Under the existing Alberta Heritage Fund Interest Reduction Program, 153,000 Alberta families have been shielded from high mortgage interest rates. The program will be in effect to the end of August of this year and the majority of the people in the program are expected to have had mortgage renewals at a lower interest rate by that time. To date, the Interest Shielding Program has also helped 6,000 Alberta families renegotiate their mortgages with lenders at lower interest rates.

The very successful Seniors' Home Improvement Program has helped about 45,000 senior citizens remain in their own homes in 1984 and represents a commitment of $127 million dollars which seniors can draw through the bank or financial institution of their choice. This program has

provided a major economic stimulus to material suppliers and small contractors throughout the province. During the 1983-84 fiscal year, it is estimated that the program created 4,000 jobs as a result of the expenditure of approximately $93 million.

TRANSPORTATION

Major changes to regulatory policies governing intraprovincial charter bus operations are now being made and will be phased in over a number of years beginning May 1, 1984. The new regulations will allow the charter bus industry to operate more freely, providing improved service to Albertans. Further reduction in regulations affecting bus and truck operations will be considered this year.

In 1983, as part of my government's efforts to assist small business, more types of work were contracted to the private sector. In 1984, paving and base course camps will be phased out and all such work formerly undertaken by government will be tendered to the private sector. Maintenance activities such as snowplowing and mowing will be contracted as much as possible. My government will also continue its existing policy in respect to tendering construction work in a way which will assure that smaller contractors will be enabled to bid on major projects.

UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS

The Rural Gas Program now serves a quarter of a million rural Albertans, an increase of 13,000 over 1982. The approximately 50,000 miles of pipeline installed at a cost of $290 million over the last ten years substantially completed the construction of rural gas utilities in all agricultural areas of the province.

Significant changes have been made to the municipal water supply and sewage treatment grant program to assist municipalities to design and implement cost-effective utility projects. Appropriate amendments will also be proposed to the Assembly to update existing rural electrification programs.

MANPOWER

In order to respond effectively to unemployment, my government is carrying out several employment and training programs. These programs, which essentially support private sector job creation efforts, include the Priority Employment Program which is providing employment and training for over 10,000 Albertans with funding of approximately $26 million. The Industrial Training element, providing training both to existing workers and

new workers, has helped those in the program to be more productive and competitive. The Alberta Vocational Training Program assisted more than 15,000 disadvantaged and disabled Albertans to take vocational training. Also, during 1983, seven new trades were designated under the Manpower Development Act.

LABOUR

The special Advisory Committee on the Construction Industry is expected to report in the near future. The Committee's proposals for the betterment of the construction industry will be of importance and, if they lead to greater stability in labour relations in this key industry, will aid the investment climate and job opportunities.

My government has supported the recent major public awareness campaign to promote tolerance and understanding of others carried out by the Alberta Human Rights Commission. The theme, Alberta Is For All of Us, underscores the spirit and continuing commitment of my government to sustain the fundamental rights of all Albertans.

MUNICIPAL AFFAIRS

My government recognizes the importance of locally elected responsible government to continuing growth and development in Alberta. Work will, therefore, continue toward incorporation of Improvement Districts capable of assuming full responsibility for municipal government.

Measures will be introduced to implement the major recommendations of the Minister's Advisory Committee on Debenture Approval Process. As well, a joint working committee made up of representatives from the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Association of Improvement Districts will be asked to make recommendations on the question of grants consolidation.

Steps will be taken to provide for greater equity in the property taxation system.

PUBLIC WORKS, SUPPLY AND SERVICES

In support of the private sector, an increasing amount of maintenance work is being carried out by private contractors and this year some 20 government-owned office buildings will be tendered to the private sector for total operation and management.

In recognition of the cost of capital, holdback percentages on major contracts are being reduced and replaced by additional security requirements. Alberta manufacturers are being supported through encouragement to contractors to use Alberta products on government construction projects.

PUBLIC LANDS AND WILDLIFE

A new Wildlife Act will be recommended to the Assembly during the spring sitting to reflect the principles outlined in the Fish and Wildlife Policy for Alberta as well as the extensive public comment received. The new Act will be aimed at simplification and clarification of regulations and will encourage economic opportunities for the private sector.

These new policies represent the most contemporary and advanced proposals in Canada for fish and wildlife resource management.

Twelve major integrated resource plans covering more than 30,000 square miles of public land will be completed in 1984. These plans will identify significant economic development opportunities including major areas for agricultural expansion, commercial tourism and recreation development.

A major computer-assisted mapping program will form the base for Alberta's land and natural resource information and will be produced almost entirely by the private sector.

Some 220,000 acres of land will be posted for agricultural disposition in 1984/85 under the accelerated land sales program. Surveys of 12,000 acres and inventories on 90,000 acres of Crown land will be contracted to the private sector.

During 1984, 150 new range improvement projects on grazing lease lands will be started. In addition, more than 600 projects started in earlier years will be fully or partially completed. All projects are being undertaken through contracts with the private sector.

ATTORNEY GENERAL AND SOLICITOR GENERAL

As a result of an extensive review of all Alberta legislation, amendments to a number of statutes will be proposed during this Session in order to assure compliance within Alberta law with the provisions of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

The new Young Offenders Act, placed before the Assembly in the last Session for review and comment by Honourable Members and by the public, will be re-introduced.

A new Bill will be recommended to allow the courts to provide for pre-judgment interest in certain types of claims for debt or damages and legislation will also be proposed for consideration by the Assembly in respect to exemptions under The Exemptions Act.

The Chattel Securities Registry Act will be proclaimed in the near future providing for fully automated registries in both the central and vehicle registries. It is anticipated that by the end of April 1984, all Central Registry records will have been converted to a computer mode allowing computer searches in that registry.

A new correction centre is under construction in Grande Cache. When it opens next year, its 250 employees will provide a necessary element of economic stability in that community.

The Alberta Liquor Control Board has taken a number of initiatives to simplify and reduce regulations and to provide greater flexibility and opportunity to the hotel, restaurant and related industries, as well as for manufacturers of beverage alcohol in Alberta.

CONSUMER AND CORPORATE AFFAIRS

Legislation will be recommended to the Assembly to establish clearer standards of disclosure in transactions between businesses offering credit and consumers. Honourable Members will also be asked to consider legislation to introduce a system of self-registration for real estate salesmen and step licensing for insurance agents and brokers. These legislative proposals would limit the need for government intervention in licensing while the industry organizations will have more responsibility in the conduct of their affairs.

RECREATION AND PARKS

Following amendments to the Provincial Parks Act, regulations are being updated and streamlined to meet changing needs and to enhance public use of existing parks and recreation areas.

During the past year, my government initiated a comprehensive program to increase the role of the private sector in park maintenance. Community groups and local contractors became more actively involved and, as a result of the success of these initiatives, maintenance work contracted to the private sector will increase significantly this year. Private sector operations at the Kananaskis Country golf course, the ski hill at Strathcona Science Park and at Cypress Hills Provincial Park emphasize small business opportunities within the recreation and parks system, a policy my government will continue to encourage.

Added facilities in Cypress Hills, Carson Pegasus and Whitney Lakes Provincial Parks to be put in place this summer, will significantly improve these parks as part of the high quality parks and recreation system which serves Albertans throughout the province.

The new Alberta Sport Council to be responsible for providing enrichment opportunities for Alberta athletes, coaches, officials and others involved in sport development in Alberta, will commence operation on April 1 this year.

Planning for International Youth Year (1985) will reflect my government's strong commitment to the growth and development of young Albertans.

CULTURE

The capital programs to expand preservation and awareness of Alberta's history and development is a feature of my government's policy.

Dedication of the site for the new Fort McMurray Oil Sands Interpretive Centre, scheduled to open in 1985, took place recently. The Centre will represent public and private sector involvement in a project to document the history of our important oil sands development.

Work is continuing on the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village Project east of Edmonton and by this summer a total of 11 buildings will have been restored and furnished. Staffing and renovations for the visitor reception centre will also be completed. The Leitch Collieries Historic Site in the Crownest Pass has been completed, and the Frank Slide Interpretive Centre currently under construction, is to be completed this summer. These two attractions, together with others, will provide new tourist destinations in the

Crowsnest Pass and Southwestern Alberta and will help to provide a more diversified economy for this part of the province.

Growth continues in the number and strength of performing arts organizations throughout the province. These organizations are being served primarily by volunteers, whose efforts are essential to the success of these important programs.

PERSONNEL ADMINISTRATION

In keeping with my government's commitment to privatize service areas where appropriate, the Temporary Staff Services Unit of the Personnel Administration Office will close as of June 1, 1984. Instead, private sector staffing firms will be used when additional temporary support is needed in providing government services. Privatization in this area will enable government to provide services through peak periods without reducing the level of service to the public.

TREASURY

The upcoming provincial Budget will stress a trimmer, leaner government and responsible management of the public finances at a time of limited revenue growth.

For the first time, the Legislature will review and vote on proposed financing for the four Crown corporations that will receive their funds from the Alberta Investment Division of the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund.

Amendments will be proposed to the public pension Acts to clarify the roles of the pension boards and, where appropriate, for the purpose of strengthening the financial integrity of the pension funds guaranteed by government in order to protect future taxpayers and pensioners.

To reduce the regulatory load, the Fuel Oil Administration Act will be simplified and the Municipal Land Loans Act will be repealed.

FEDERAL AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS

In the interests of promoting dialogue on Canada's economic future, my government released last fall, a discussion paper entitled "Alberta in Canada; Strength in Diversity". My government looks forward to receiving the views of Albertans and of interested Canadians, on the important economic issues raised in that document.

The Select Legislative Committee on Senate Reform will continue during the Session with its dialogue with Albertans as to possible ways in

which provinces as partners in Confederation can be better represented within national institutions.

My government will continue to encourage and support the twinning relationships with provinces in Japan, Republic of Korea and the Peoples Republic of China.

CONCLUSION

Nineteen eighty-three was highlighted by the visit to our province of several prominent world leaders, including the Prince and Princess of Wales, and by the successful hosting in Edmonton of the World University Games.

Nineteen eighty-four will be highlighted by the visit, in September, of Pope John Paul II — an occasion which Albertans are looking forward to as a memorable and historic event.

During the spring the government plans to present a paper setting forth an Economic Strategy for Alberta, for consideration by the citizens of the province. The document will reassess Alberta's current economic strategy for the past decade and propose possible shifts in emphasis for the decade ahead.

The major challenge facing the government is to steer a careful course between sound financial management and a climate for job-producing private sector initiatives while maintaining, at the same time, our high level of public services.

Members of the Legislative Assembly: In due course you will be presented with budget proposals by my government to support these priorities consistent with appropriate restraint in public expenditures. You will be asked to grant the necessary funds for the operating services and expenditures authorized by the Legislature and to endorse a program of capital financing for the Government of Alberta.

I leave you now to the business of the Session, with full confidence that as elected representatives, your debates and your votes will reflect your understanding of the public interest of all people of Alberta.

I pray for your wisdom and strength in your deliberations.

POOR

QUALITY

ORIGINAL